AVENGERS

JONATHAN HICKMAN
DUSTIN WEAVER
JUSTIN PONSOR

MARVEL NOW!

JOIN THE REVOLUTION

008

WWW.MARVEL.COM © 2013 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

PREVIOUSLY IN AVENGERS

A WHITE EVENT OCCURS WHEN A WORLD IS ON THE VERGE OF ASCENDING ON A UNIVERSAL SCALE.

A WHITE EVENT CREATES/ALTERS HERALDS TO SHEPHERD THIS ASCENSION, AND A NIGHTMASK ALWAYS ACTS AS FORERUNNER OF THE CHANGE.

I AM A *NIGHTMASK.*

THERE SHOULD BE OTHERS.

SHOULD?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

THE MACHINE IS BROKEN.

THE UNIVERSE IS BROKEN.

IT'S CALLED A *STARBRAND.*

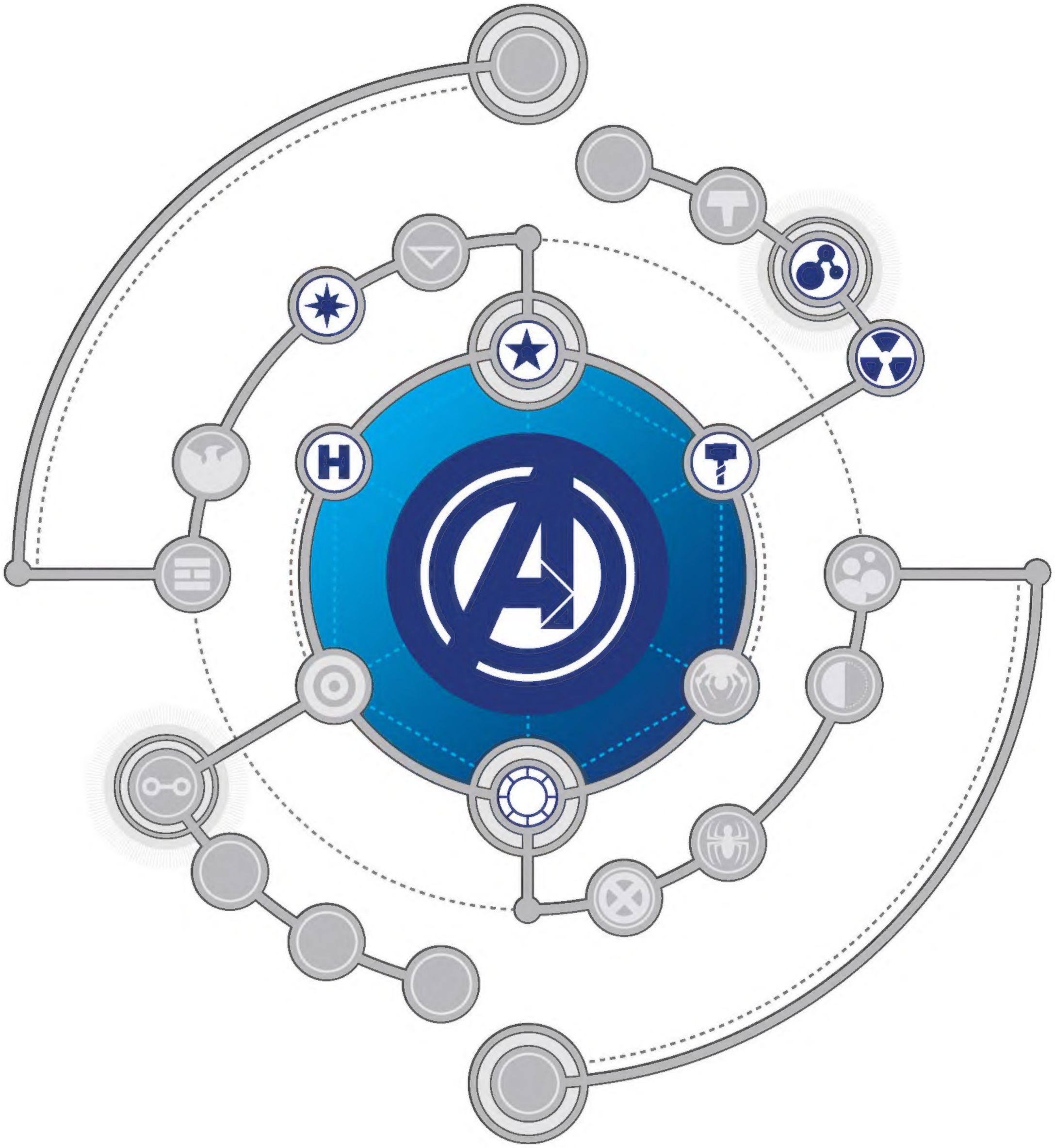
SO WHAT'S IT DO BESIDE BLOW UP SCHOOLS?

IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE SOME KIND OF PLANETARY DEFENSE MECHANISM.

SO IT'S A MACHINE...A DELIVERY SYSTEM OF SOME KIND?

JUST A PERSON...

"...SOME NORMAL SOMEBODY WITH THE POWER TO DEFEND AN ENTIRE PLANET."



EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES

CAPTAIN AMERICA • IRON MAN • THOR • HAWKEYE • BLACK WIDOW • HULK
WOLVERINE • SPIDER-MAN • CAPTAIN MARVEL • SPIDER-WOMAN
FALCON • SHANG-CHI • SUNSPOT • CANNONBALL • MANIFOLD
SMASHER • CAPTAIN UNIVERSE • HYPERION

"STARBRANDED"

WRITER: JONATHAN HICKMAN

ARTIST: DUSTIN WEAVER

COLOR ARTIST: JUSTIN PONSOR
LETTERER: VC's CORY PETIT
COVER ART: DUSTIN WEAVER and JUSTIN PONSOR
VARIANT COVER ART: DANIEL ACUÑA
ASSISTANT EDITOR: JAKE THOMAS
EDITORS: TOM BREVOORT with LAUREN SANKOVITCH
EDITOR IN CHIEF: AXEL ALONSO
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER: JOE QUESADA
PUBLISHER: DAN BUCKLEY
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: ALAN FINE

© 2013 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental.

OH, MAN...

REMOTE SWEEP COMPLETED BY THE QUINJET, CAP...

WE'VE GOT A DEAD ZONE WITH A ONE MILE RADIUS.

IF WE'RE GOING TO--

NO, LOOK AT HIM.

HE'S JUST A BOY.

IT'S OKAY.
HELP'S HERE NOW.
ARE YOU OKAY--YOU HURT?
BZZTT
YOU'RE SITTING IN A SMOKING CRATER, KID. NAKED.
WE'VE ALL GATHERED HERE TODAY TO BRING YOU PANTS.
QUINJET'S PICKING UP LOTS OF ACTIVITY NOW. MILITARY INBOUND--ESTIMATING 10 MINUTES OUT.
THING'S ARE GETTING READY TO ESCALATE, CAP.
I DON'T... I MEAN...
YOU'RE CAPTAIN AMERICA...
WHY AM I...
WHY AM I TALKING TO CAPTAIN AMERICA... WHAT...
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
IT'S OKAY...
WHAT'S YOUR NAME, SON?
KEVIN...
IT'S KEVIN CONNOR.
GET ME SOMETHING.
SEARCHING...

SUBJECT FOUND: CONNOR, KEVIN KALE

KID'S CLEAN, STEVE.

GOOD GRADES. NO DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS. NO LEGAL TROUBLE OF ANY KIND--NOTHING'S BEEN SCRUBBED FROM HIS RECORD.

AS FAR AS I CAN TELL, THE ONLY THING WRONG IS HE'S PAST DUE FOR A BOOSTER SHOT.

TETANUS.

ALL RIGHT.

LET'S GET READY TO MOVE OUT.

OKAY.

OKAY.

OKAY, KEVIN. WE'RE GOING TO GET YOU AWAY FROM HERE.

WE NEED TO HAVE SOME PEOPLE LOOK AT YOU--HAVE THEM RUN SOME TESTS-- TO TRY AND FIGURE OUT WHAT HAPPENED HERE TODAY.

HOW'S THAT SOUND?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY TESTS?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT...

OH...

OH...

IS THAT?

ARE THOSE...

DEAD...

DEAD.

EVERYONE'S DEAD. OH, GOD...

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

WE'RE GOING TO FIGURE THAT OUT, BUT WE NEED TO GET YOU TO--

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?!

YOU DID.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

MY CHILDREN MADE SYSTEMS. YOU ARE A FLAWED PRODUCT OF THOSE SYSTEMS.

YOU WERE DESIGNED TO BE A WEAPON, KEVIN CONNOR. THAT WEAPON BECAME ACTIVE AND 3,203 PEOPLE DIED.

NO. NO. NO.

I WOULD NEVER...I...

NO. I COULDN'T...

YOU ALSO HAVE AN INCREASED METABOLISM NOW. YOU'LL NEED TO EAT SOON.

CALM DOWN. WE'RE GOING TO HELP YOU. WE DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED HERE.

NO!

HE'S GOING ACTIVE. EVERYONE GET BACK!

WE HAVE A PRETTY GOOD IDEA OF HIS BLAST RADIUS. LET'S PULL BACK BEYOND THAT POINT AND TRY AND MANAGE THIS FROM THERE.

OR NOT.

HULK! STOP!

RRARRRRRRRR!

NO.

WHOA.

CAPTAIN MARVEL.

YEAH?

PLEASE GO RETRIEVE OUR HULK. GOOD CHANCE WE'RE GONNA NEED HIM.

IRON MAN, BREAK RADIO SILENCE AND TELL THE MILITARY TO STAY BACK--WE CAN'T BE WORRIED ABOUT THEM WHILE SUBDUING THE TARGET.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN SUBDUE?

HE ATTACKED ME--I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT HAPPENED... *WHAT I DID.*

WHY WOULD--

BECAUSE ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES, KEVIN CONNOR.

BECAUSE WE ARE ALL JUDGED BY WHAT WE HAVE DONE.

IT IS NO SMALL SICKNESS, BECOMING DEATH.

NOW LOWER YOUR HAND AND LIE ON THE GROUND.

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO?

WHAAAAM

WHAT YOU WANT, BOY, IS A CONCERN FOR YOUR MOTHER OR YOUR WEAK-KNEED FATHER.

THUNK

NOW...ARE YOU CAPABLE OF DOING AS YOU ARE TOLD, OR DO YOU CRAVE FURTHER INSTRUCTION?

I BARELY FELT THAT.

I BARELY FELT THAT AT ALL.

AND NOW ESCALATION.

HE WANTS TO BECOME WHAT HE IS. STARBRAND.

THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE AT WORK HERE.

OKAY... TAKE HIM DOWN.

AAIIIEEEEE!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS IS.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME...

BUT I DO KNOW ONE THING...

I'M NOT GOING TO LE--

RRRR

RRRR

I SEE IT NOW. THE SYSTEM IS MORE THAN BROKEN.

THE SYSTEM IS CONFLICTED.

YES.

AND NOW...

"YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE THINGS WORSE."

NOW, THOR!

DO IT!

AARRRRRRRR!

STOP!

CAPTAIN, I SWEAR I WOULD STAB OUT MY FATHER'S ONLY EYE BEFORE FAILING TO SHOW THIS FOOL MJOLNIR'S YIELD.

JUST... *HOLD ON* A SECOND.

NIGHTMASK, CAN YOU HELP?

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO STOP THIS?

YES.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME.

A *WHITE EVENT* HAPPENED.

I UNDERSTAND IT...AND I CAN SHOW YOU.

MOTHER?

DO IT.

BUT THIS ENDS WITH YOU IN A BOX.

RIGHT WHERE YOU BELONG.

...

SO THAT WENT WELL.

WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

THE SYSTEM IS BROKEN, KEVIN CONNOR. THIS RESULTED IN A COMPROMISED TRANSITION OF THE STARBRAND AVATAR...

SO I MOVED US FROM THERE TO HERE, TO EASE THAT TRANSITION...TO EASE *YOUR* TRANSITION.

AS *YOU* ARE NOW THE STARBRAND.

RIGHT. SUPER.

THANKS.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

LOOK AT YOUR HAND.

THAT IS A STARBRAND. A WEAPON DESIGNED TO PROTECT A PEOPLE AS THEY PROGRESS THROUGH A CHANGE PERIOD, BECOMING A MORE ADVANCED SOCIETY.

IT'S A DEFENSE SYSTEM OF PLANETARY SCALE.

IT IS WHAT YOU HAVE BECOME.

YOU ARE A STARBRAND.

YOU SAID IT WAS BROKEN.

DOES THAT MEAN SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH ME?

YES, BUT SOMETHING FAR BEYOND YOU BEING AN IMPERFECT VESSEL.

IT'S MORE THAN EITHER OF US.

IT'S THE SYSTEM. ALL OF IT. EVERYTHING.

TURN AROUND.

THIS IS THE SUPERFLOW OF THE UNIVERSE.

IT IS A DYING NETWORK ***CREATED*** BY THE BUILDERS. IT IS BROKEN.

THAT LARGE MACHINE IS THE USELESS HUSK OF A COMMUNICATION STATION--A ***SYSTEM*** OF THE ***BUILDERS***. THE DELIVERY MECHANISM FOR PRODUCING AVATARS SUCH AS OURSELVES.

THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN OTHERS, BUT THIS WAS A FRACTURED, FAILED EVENT AND THEY DID NOT MANIFEST.

WE ARE, MOST LIKELY, ALONE.

SO, THINGS ARE PRETTY MUCH HOW THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN EXCEPT NOW I CAN BLOW UP A PLANET?

NO, KEVIN. NOTHING IS THE SAME.

I DON'T KNOW HOW I'M SUPPOSED TO FEEL ABOUT ANY OF THIS...

CAN WE JUST HANG OUT HERE? I JUST KNOW THAT I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK THERE...TO WHAT I DID.

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

ADAM.

COOL. THANKS FOR SAVING ME BACK THERE, ADAM. I OWE YOU ONE.

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

FOLLOW ME. WE CAN USE THIS SPACE TO TRAVEL FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER.

NO. WE MOVE ***FORWARD***--WE DO WHAT WE HAVE BEEN ENGINEERED TO DO.

BUT THERE IS A PROBLEM WITH OUR WORLD. THE ***BUILDERS*** HAD OTHER, OLDER ***SYSTEMS*** THAT CAME BEFORE ***OUR SYSTEM***. THESE SYSTEMS WERE NOT MEANT TO BE USED IN TANDEM.

THERE IS A CONFLICT, KEVIN CONNOR. WE HAVE TO FIX IT.

CAN I ASK YOU A QUESTION?

HOME.

AVENGERS TOWER.
LATER.

I...I DON'T REMEMBER.

I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING LIKE WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

I REMEMBER LIGHTS AND A CRASH, AND THEN...THIS IS ALL SO CONFUSING...

IT'S OKAY, TAMARA. IT'S FINE.

EVERYTHING'S FINE.

I TALKED TO HER THE ENTIRE WAY BACK. SHE'S GOT NO RECOLLECTION OF WHAT'S HAPPENED WHILE SHE WAS CAPTAIN UNIVERSE.

BLIND ALLEY.

EVENTUALLY, WE'RE GOING TO NEED TO BRING SOMEONE ELSE IN TO HELP WITH HER.

BUT THAT'S LATER...WHEN WE HEAD BACK OUT, WE'RE GOING TO NEED MORE THAN THE STRIKE TEAM, CAROL.

ALREADY SENT OUT THE SIGNAL. THE WORLD IS WIDE AWAKE, CAP.

GOOD...

TONY, GET BACK TO YOUR LAB AND SEE IF YOU CAN MAKE SOME SENSE OF THE MACHINE THE NIGHTMASK BUILT...

MAYBE USE IT TO FIND WHERE THEY DISAPPEARED TO.

ACTUALLY, THAT'S NOT GOING TO BE A PROBLEM...

WHEN WE WERE IN MY LAB, I TAGGED HIM WITH A UNIVERSAL TRACKER.

I SHOULD BE ABLE TO PINPOINT HIS LOCATION IF WE GET A PING. AND, FORTUNATELY, AS LONG AS HE'S CLOSE TO OUR OWN LOCAL UNIVERSE, WE SHOULD GET ONE.

SERIOUSLY? THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE SOMETHING YOU'D COOK UP.

YEAH, BANNER, THIS IS ONE OF REED RICHARDS' MOMENTS OF INSPIRATION, ACTUALLY.

WHY WOULD--

PING!

GOT IT. HE'S...

OH, NO...

WHAT IT IS?

WHAT'S WRONG?

UNBELIEVABLE.

HE'S ON MARS.

UH... THE SKY'S RED.

WE'RE NOT ON...THIS ISN'T EARTH, IS IT?

NO. THIS IS *THE GARDEN.*

MARS.

"I WAS BORN HERE..."

I WAS PERFECTED HERE.

MEANT TO BE A BETTER MAN THAN ALL OF YOU OLD HUMANS...BUT THEN SOMETHING HAPPENED.

THE WHITE EVENT.

I WAS REPURPOSED FROM AN OLDER SYSTEM TO A NEW ONE...

AND NOW THOSE SYSTEMS ARE IN CONFLICT. WHICH PUTS US IN CONFLICT WITH THE ONE WHO MADE ME.

MY FATHER...

"EX NIHILO."

LOOK, ABYSS...

LOOK.

AH, CHILDREN...

THEY GROW UP SO FAST.

THE ASSEMBLY!

YOUR ONE-STOP NEWS SOURCE FOR ALL THINGS AVENGERS!

It's been a long time in coming—since last year's Free Comic Book Day at least! But at last, it's time to prepare for the **AGE OF ULTRON**—a monster storyline from the mind of Brian Michael Bendis and the drawing boards of Bryan Hitch, Brandon Peterson and Carlos Pacheco! The unstoppable A.I. known as Ultron strikes—and before the Marvel Universe knows what's happening, it's all over! And that's just where the story begins! For maximum excitement, AGE OF ULTRON will be coming at you multiple times each month (the first three amazing issues all shipping in March!) along with dedicated tie-in issues of your favorite titles!

This is the first month in forever that doesn't have a new Avengers-affiliated Marvel Now! title launching! So we figured this would be a good time to catch our breath, go to the mail bag, and get a sense of what you guys have thought about our dramatic creative relaunches:

I really did enjoy UNCANNY AVENGERS #1. John Cassaday's art alone is worth the price of admission.

–Chris Lopez

I just read UNCANNY AVENGERS #1 and I found it fascinating. There are so many great ideas exploited by Remender.

–Arcadio Bolaños

I loved AVENGERS ASSEMBLE #9 and am so looking forward to see what Kelly & Stefano have in store for us. The snappy dialogue and perfect characterization was a welcome breath of fresh air.

–Rachael Sherwood

UNCANNY AVENGERS #1 was AMAZING! SPECTACULAR! UNCANNILY AWESOME! I really cannot wait to see where the series goes and what arcs you guys have in store for us in the future.

–Isaac Orr-Green

LOVE the direction you are taking this book!!!! I wasn't a huge fan of Rogue but she is coming off as a very powerful character, and less whiny.

–Joseph D. Urbick

It has been a long time since I have sent an email into Marvel after reading a comic book but after reading AVENGERS #1 I had to write to say job well done!

–Scott Zachry

While I was a little sad to see J. Hickman leave FANTASTIC FOUR and FF, I´m glad he´s now writing AVENGERS. It´s just what the title needed!

–Iñigo Pm

I just finished AVENGERS #1, and as a 57 year old long time comic book reader, I have to say I was extremely disappointed. While I understand that it's simply the first issue, it seemed unstructured, "overwritten" and confusing with no clear cut point of view.

–Mike Vadis

I just wanted to drop you a line and let you know that I really enjoyed issue #9 of the AVENGERS ASSEMBLE series. It was difficult for me to stifle my heinous giggling at the hijinks of Stark and Thor vs. Spider-Woman and Hulk, and I actually had someone come over to me and ask what I was enjoying so much!

–Nikki N.

I was pleasantly surprised. The art by Jerome Opena has come a long way since UNCANNY X-FORCE #1. Hyperion, Smasher, a new Captain Universe? Pretty cool new members, too!

–Andrew J. Shaw

Just wanted to comment on how great this first AVENGERS issue is. The villains are intriguing and compelling right from the get-go. I love that the writing is drawing from classic religious references like Ex Nihilo. It makes the story and dialogue feel rich and interesting.

–Jenny Tarof

I'm absolutely loving the new era - love Jonathan Hickman's writing, love Jerome Opena's artwork - and I understand that the whole point of this story-arc is for the new Avengers team to save the butts of the old Avengers team. So you de-power Iron Man's armor, and you mind-control the Hulk, fine, fine - but in issue #2, you have Thor hanging helpless wrapped in...vines. Vines, people! Try remembering: he's not 'normal guy plus enchanted hammer' - he's 'Hulk-strong guy plus enchanted hammer.' Yeesh.

–Steve Donoghue

I am glad to see the Black Panther back on the scene and making big moves. He is my favorite character. He's also a great choice to lead the New Avengers.

–Vincent

Wow! This is one of the most beautiful books that I've seen in a long time. It's edgy and simply put, utterly brilliant.

–Brian Chamberlin

I was on the fence about AVENGERS... until I saw Cannonball and Sunspot recruited! Cannonball has been my absolute favorite character for years and Sunspot is next in line. Please let them represent the X by kicking major butt as Avengers!

–Isaac Woodby

I have loved comics since I was a kid (I'm 31 now). I started collecting them again with the introduction of Marvel Now! I have yet to be disappointed. I just finished reading UNCANNY AVENGERS #3 and all I can say is Wow! That was one heck of a fun roller coaster ride. I loved seeing the Red Skull lose his hand and then Thor bowing down and pledging allegiance at the end. I can't wait to see what you guys do with the apocalypse storyline that is still to come.

–Norman Shane Noah

Well, you've done it. You have officially won me over...big time! I just finished UNCANNY AVENGERS #3 and I had to pick my jaw up off of the floor. Not only that, but for the first time in a long time, I can truly say that I have no idea what is going to happen next.

–Steven Taylor

NEXT ISSUE:

AVENGERS TITLES ON SALE

AVENGERS #7
THE LAST WHITE EVENT!

AVENGERS #8
WHO IS THE NEW STAR BRAND?

AVENGERS ARENA #6
ANOTHER SHOCKING DEATH ENDS THE FIRST STORY ARC!

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE #13
THE BLACK WIDOW STANDS IN JUDGMENT FOR THE SINS OF HER PAST!

DARK AVENGERS #188
AT WAR WITH IRON MAN!

NEW AVENGERS #4
WORLD EATER! AND THAT CAN ONLY MEAN...GALACTUS!

SECRET AVENGERS #2
NICK FURY AND TASKMASTER MUST ESCAPE FROM BAGALIA, THE RED LIGHT NATION!

UNCANNY AVENGERS #6
THOR VS APOCALYPSE AT THE DAWN OF TIME!

YOUNG AVENGERS #3
WHO'S WORSE THAN LOKI? HIS FATHER...

A + X #6
CAPTAIN MARVEL AND WOLVERINE! PLUS, IRON MAN AND BEAST!

ALSO ON SALE!

MARVEL UNIVERSE AVENGERS: EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES #12

zone